CONSUMER TIME

YARDSTICK OF QUALITY

NETWORK: NBC DATE: January 27, 1945

ORIGIN: WRC TIME: 12:15-12:30 PM-EWT

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL

2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!

3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.

4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available as a public service for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the War Food Administration.

Today as we promised, we are going to talk about how food for our fighting forces...and for civilians...is inspected and graded by the U. S. Government. Perhaps you haven't heard this story before Many have not. And so maybe you'll detect a certain familiar note in the breakfast table conversation of one Mr. Will Jones and wife.

5. WILL: (YAWN) Believe I'll have another cup of coffee, Stella.

6. STELLA: Here you are, Will. Paper say it's going to be any warmer?

7. WILL: Hmmmm...let's see.

8. SOUND: (NEWSPAPER)

9. WILL: Nope. (READS) "Cloudy and continued cold". Says "light snow beginning late this afternoon or tonight".

10. STELLA: Will, I wish you'd put down that paper and talk to me.

11. WILL: You just asked me what the weather was...

12. STELLA: I know...but now you've read all the news, and I just want you to talk to me.

13. WILL: (CHUCKLE) For twenty years you've been sayin' that at breakfast, Stella. And for twenty years I've been putting down the paper...

14. STELLA: Well, it's a wonder I still have to say it...

15. WILL: Got any more of that grapefruit juice, d'you think?

16. STELLA: Why certainly, Will. (PROJECTING) Do you like this kind?

17. WILL: (CALLING) S'pretty good!

18. STELLA: (RETURNED) See here...it says "Grade A" on the can.

19. WILL: Oh, everything says "Grade A". You can't go by that.

20. STELLA: Everything does <u>not</u> say "Grade A". I've got some cans of peas in the kitchen that are "Grade B".

21. WILL: (NOT TAKING IT SERIOUSLY) Oh! Oh ho! And what am I...a man of means...what am I doing with anything Grade B in my house?

22. STELLA: Oh don't be silly, Will. Grade B simply means the peas maybe aren't the same, even size and color. Not as fancy.

23. WILL: But they're just as good?

24. STELLA: Of course they are.

25. WILL: Then I suppose Grade C could be just as good to eat?

26. STELLA: Practically always...yes!

27. WILL: (LOUD LAUGH) Oh...you women, you women!

28. STELLA: (INDIGNANT) What do you mean, "we women"?

29. WILL: You get the daggondest notions! You believe anything you read... anything it says on the label.

30. STELLA: Now you look here, Will!

31. WILL: (CALLING OFF) I've got to get outside...I'll miss my car pool.

32. STELLA: Oh isn't that just like you. The minute I try to tell you something...

33. WILL: (OFF) You don't have to tell me about that sort of thing. "Grade A"! (LAUGH) You women...you'll believe anything.

[illegible]

[illegible]

34. STELLA: Will, I am not going to let you get out of this house saying a thing like that...and laughing about it to those men in your car pool. This is one time I'm going to tell you! Now Will, just look at the label on this can of grapefruit juice.

35. WILL: Stella, honestly I haven't time. It's quarter to eight. You can tell me all about it tonight.

36. STELLA: See here. In this shield it says "packed under continuous inspection". Now I suppose that doesn't mean anything either?

37. WILL: O.K.! So it says "packed under continuous inspection". So it's inspected (GOING OFF...PROJECTING) So it's delicious! So it's Grade A! I didn't mean to start anything...

38. STELL: (WARNING...CALLING) Will Jones, you...

39. WILL: (PROJECTING) Goodbye dear!

40. SOUND: DOOR SLAM.....TELEPHONE RING ON TOP.

41. STELLA: (DEJECTED) Oh dear. Already. Who could that be? Hello...Oh yes, Madge. Oh, I don't know. I just feel out of sorts, that's all. No. No reason...no it isn't the weather. Well, I just had a sort of row with Will....(LAUGH) Oh goodness no, nothing serious. Only he's so stubborn. Well, it was just a little thing. But you see, he kept telling me...this sounds sort of silly to repeat...but he kept saying at breakfast that Grade A and Grade B and so forth, on canned foods, you know, didn't mean anything. And that the inspected seal didn't mean anything. And I don't know, he just said women believed anything they saw on a label. (LAUGH) Yes, I know, Madge, but there's no reason for him just to take a stand like that, and be stubborn! He doesn't know a thing about it... Do I? Why of course I do, Madge. What? What do you mean you have an idea? What kind of idea, Madge? But for goodness sake, then....tell me about it...(SLOW FADE)...

SLIGHT PAUSE:

42. ANNCR: And so far, far into the morning. But it seems that something is definitely cooking between Stella and her neighbor Madge. By six o'clock that evening, Stella has on her best dress, and her prettiest, most innocent smile. Will has had a hard day at the office...

43. WILL: But why can't I put my slippers on? We're not going out to dinner on a night like this!

44. STELLA: (SWEETLY) No of course we're not going out to dinner, Will.

45. WILL: Then why do I have to stay dressed up this way?

46. STELLA: Comb your hair, Will dear, and hurry.

47. WILL: Suppose you tell me what's up.

48. STELLA: Now I want you to be very nice at dinner, Will.

49. WILL: Nice at dinner? I'm always nice at dinner.

50. STELLA: Will, do you remember that pretty girl that Charles was always so fond of...Madge's cousin?

51. WILL: (SURLY) Charles was fond of lots of pretty girls.

52. STELLA: Well...this one is Mary. I've invited her to dinner tonight!

53. WILL: Now what possible excuse could we have for inviting a girl friend of our son's to dinner...when he's out in the Pacific somewhere. They ...they're not engaged, are they?

54. STELLA: Shhh! Not so loud, Will. No they're not...in fact you probably don't even remember Mary.

55. WILL: Sure I do. She's the dark-haired one...works for the Government. Wears a nurse's uniform.

56. STELLA: She doesn't wear a nurse's uniform. That's an inspector's uniform.

57. WILL: Well, whatever it is. I remember her. She's always traveling around the country somewhere. You say she's coming here to dinner ...tonight?

58. STELLA: Yes, and she'll be here any minute...so hurry up, Will...(FADE)

59. ANNCR: So Will rather grudgingly combs his hair, and puts on his company manners. But things don't turn out nearly as badly as he thinks. In fact, things go rather swimmingly...and we find the three of them, Will and Stella and Mary in the middle of dinner...

60. SOUND: (THREE OF THEM LAUGHING)

61. MARY: Oh Mr. Jones, you say the funniest things!

62. WILL: (VERY EXPANSIVE...COMING OUT OF THE LAUGH) Well now, Mary... Say you know it's mighty nice to have you with us to dinner. Sort of cheers the old place up!

63. MARY: Goodness, I imagine you do miss Charles something terrific!

64. WILL: Yes we do. He's been out there a little over a year now.

65. STELLA: And it takes so long for us to get letters!

66. MARY? Still, there are some cheerful things to think about though. I mean for instance he is a lieutenant now...

67. STELLA: Yes...

68. MARY: And I always think it's a consolation to know they're getting good food to eat.

69. STELLA: Yes, that is really a wonderful think to think about. You know, Will...that's part of Mary's job...to see that the food the Army buys is good food.

70. WILL: Oh? Is that so? Well now isn't that fine.

71. MARY: Yes, I'm what they call an inspector. You know, the armed services don't buy any food that isn't <u>inspected</u> and <u>graded</u>. You knew that, didn't you, Mr. Jones.

72. WILL: Well...(CLEARS THROAT) I...I...of course, Mary. No food that isn't inspected and graded...

73. MARY: So consequently...that means that hundreds of us have to go all over the United States...when crops are in season...and work as inspectors in laboratories and in the canning factories!

74. WILL: I see. All girls, are you?

75. MARY: About 200 of us are! That's about half of all the Government canned foods inspectors in the country!

76. STELLA: (CRAFTILY) You...uh...you not only inspect...but you grade food too, don't you Mary?

77. MARY: (ENTHUSIASTICALLY) Oh yes, Mrs. Jones, we certainly do! I mean, if the food isn't graded...how can the Quartermaster Corps tell exactly what they're buying!

78. STELLA: (NOTE OF TRIUMPH) I thought so, dear. I just wanted to be sure...

79. MARY: Oh certainly. We grade canned foods A, B, and C.

80. STELLA: And those grades really do mean something, don't they, Mary?

81. MARY: Mean something! Why I should say! They ought to, after we've used a scopometer, salometer, vacuum guage, flotation test, brix spindles a centrifuge machine, a color dictionary and...

82. WILL: (FAST) Hey...wait a minute there!

83. MARY: (LAUGH) Of course we don't use all those devices on all foods... but they're all necessary for grading!

84. WILL: (A LITTLE FLOORED) Well, well, how does a little girl like you know how to use all that...that technical machinery!

85. MARY: Oh, that's only the half of it! That's just the grading part. We have to inspect all foods too...sometimes we have to be on hand every minute they're going through the factory!

86. STELLA: Oh...Mary...when you inspect food as it goes all the way through the plant...that means it is "packed under continuous inspection..."

87. MARY: ..."of the U. S. Department of Agriculture..." yes, that's what the seal means. You'll see it on many of the canned foods you buy yourself...and of course a great deal of the food for the Armed Forces is inspected that way, too.

88. WILL: Well its...it's certainly fine to know that our son Charles is getting food that's carefully inspected and high grade, and all that!

75. STELLA: Mary...I'm sure Will is interested in knowing just what you mean when you say "inspected". What actually has to be done before you can put the stamp of approval on a shipment of canned foods.

76. WILL: Mary...I have a confession to make. I have to admit...I am cornered and trapped. I knew Stella had something up her sleeve.

77. MARY: (LAUGH) Yes, Mr. Jones...I know.

78. WILL: I simply said this morning...that Stella shouldn't go around believing everything she saw on a label.

79. STELLA: Yes, "Mr. Jones", Mary knows...

80. WILL: All right, girls...I've learned my lesson. You've shown me there's really something to this food inspection business, all right, Mary, and I believe it!

81. STELLA: Not so fast, Will! You don't think you know all there is to know about it now, do you?

82. WILL: Now, Stella...

83. STELLA: I should think you'd be interested in what your own son is getting to eat out there in the Pacific.

84. WILL: Of course I am, Stella. Mary's going to tell us all about it, aren' you, Mary!

85. MARY: Well...are you sure you want to hear all...

86. STELLA: Certainly we do, dear!

87. MARY: Then let's see..I could begin...oh I know! When the hurricane hit Florida last fall!

88. WILL: What about <u>that</u>?

89. MARY: You remember when the wind blew all those grapefruit off the trees!

90. WILL: Sure!

91. MARY: Well, the canners had to get busy and can them right away, or they'd spoil.

92. STELLA: And you inspectors had to hurry down there to be on the job!

93. MARY: Yes. We were called from all over the country and went as fast as we could get there...by plane and train...some of us drove...and believe me, we had plenty to do when we arrived!

94. WILL: Well, actually now, where would you start on an inspection job like that for grapefruit juice, for instance?

95. MARY: If we are assigned on continuous inspection we start where the big truckloads of fruit enter the factory. We inspect them while the fruit is being washed and steamed. And then when it goes up on the inspection belt, where the bad fruit is sorted out.

96. STELLA: And you have to see that everything is clean and spotless in the plant, don't you, Mary?

97. MARY: Yes, that's one of our most important jobs. We have to see that the floors are scrubbed...that the equipment is immaculate...that the light is bright enough. And something else...

98. WILL: What's that?

99. MARY: We check on the workers to see if they are wearing caps and aprons ...and boots and rubber gloves, where those are necessary! It's a real housekeeping job for us!

100. WILL: Well you know, I never knew all that went on....

101. MARY: Yes, certainly! And before a factory can even be accepted for Government continuous inspection service, it has to have excellent lighting...good equipment...and it must be spotless!

102. STELLA: Well now let's hear what you do after the fruit is sorted, Mary.

103. MARY: Well, we simply have to be on hand...inspecting...while the fruit is going through the whole canning process...until it comes out juice in sealed cans! Now the really technical job comes later ...the grading. To determine whether it's A, B, or C.

104. STELLA: I see.

105. MARY: But the inspection...the continuous inspection, as it says on the can label...is simply a matter of keeping a sharp eye out during the canning operation...to be sure that everything is clean, sanitary, and healthful.

106. WILL: All right, now Mary...let's hear about how you grade 'em.

107. MARY: Well, about ten or fifteen days after the fruit is packed...we go into the warehouse...and select about 60 cans out of, say, 10,000 cases.

108. WILL: Pick 'em out from anywhere?

109. MARY: Just at random, so we'll get a good cross section.

110. WILL: Oh I see.

111. MARY: Then we take them to our laboratory...we usually have one nearby. And the work begins. We have to test each one of the 60 cans we've selected.

112. STELLA: That must be a job!

113. MARY: It is. Mrs. Jones...did you say you had a can of "Grade A" grapefruit juice here?

114. STELLA: Yes indeed.

115. MARY: If you'll let me have a glassful of it...I'll explain how we graded it.

116. STELLA: All right...(GOING)...just a minute, Mary...

117. WILL: Say, Mary...I noticed...that seal said "U. S. Grade A". But I've seen some that have just the plain grade...no "U.S." What does that mean?

118. MARY: If it has "U.S." on it...that means the food has been packed under this continuous inspection I was telling you about. If you see it without the U. S. that means it's been graded all right, according to specifications, but hasn't been Government-inspected all along the line!

119. WILL: Well there's sure a lot about this I never knew. Sounds like a man's job to me!

120. MARY: It used to be...before the war. But more and more women are taking over now.

121. STELLA: Here's the grapefruit juice, Mary.

122. MARY: Thanks! Now first of all...let's hold it up to the light. See how clear it is? It's the same color as fresh juice.

123. STELLA: Oh...yes...

124. MARY: Well, we have to test it for color. We have a color dictionary... with all shades of yellow...and if the juice matches the right shade, it gets so many points. If it's dull or pale, we give it fewer points.

125. WILL: Now what do you know! And do you taste it too?

126. MARY: Certainly! That's a very important part of it. It has to have a good flavor! Then we give it a special sugar test...to see if it's sweet enough. And we test it again for acid content.

127. WILL: And you grade all these things by points?

128. MARY: Yes...so many points for color...flavor...sugar...absence of pulp and seeds etc., then we add the points up! If the fruit juice scores 85 or over, it's Grade A...if it doesn't get less than 70 points, it's Grade C, and so on!

129. WILL: Now that sounds mighty scientific!

130. MARY: It is scientific, Mr. Jones. It has to be...for Government buyers.

131. WILL: They always buy Grade A?

132. MARY: Well...they want the best, naturally...but sometimes Grade B or Grade C fruit and vegetables are better for their purpose.

133. WILL: How's that, Mary?

134. MARY: Well, now for instance...when the color of a food makes a difference or delicate flavor...or perfect shape...then Grade A is best.

135. STELLA: I see...

136. MARY: Now Grade B fruits and vegetables...are almost as perfect as A. They may be a trifle less tender. They're for everyday use, so to speak!

137. STELLA: Well now I find Grade C is usually just as good as any of 'em!

138. MARY: That's true...and it's a thrifty buy. Grade C foods may not be quite as uniform in color and size...but they're delicious, and every bit as good for you as the other grades!

139. STELLA: Well, now, Will...do you feel educated?

140. WILL: Looks to me as though you learned plenty yourself, Stella.

141. STELLA: Frankly, I did.

142. WILL: Now as I understand it...all canned food for the Army and Navy and Marines...

143. MARY: And Lend-Lease, don't forget...

144. WILL: All this food has to be inspected by the War Food Administration.

145. MARY: Right.

146. WILL: And some canned for civilians is inspected too.

147. MARY: Yes...but not all of it by any means. It pays, though, to look for that little seal that says "packed under continuous inspection"... if you don't mind my bragging!

148. STELLA: Well, Mary...thanks a lot for the lecture....

149. WILL: (MEANINGLY) Yes, Mary...I'm glad to see we both learned a lot!

150. MARY: Well...I think you'd both enjoy having a booklet on the subject... "The ABC of Canned Fruit and Vegetable Labeling" just to settle any arguments!

[illegible] Grade B fruits and very [illegible] [illegible]
They may be a little less [illegible]. They're [illegible]
good!

[illegible] Well, for I find Grade C is usually just as [illegible]
[illegible] time [illegible] [illegible]
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151. ANNCR: Friends...the booklet entitled "The ABC of Canned Fruit and Vegetable Labeling", is yours free when you write to CONSUMER TIME, Washington 25, D. C. It tells you exactly what the grades mean on the canned foods you buy, and also explains how food is Government inspected. You'll find it's helpful to you in your shopping ...so send for your free copy of the booklet, "The ABC of Canned Fruit and Vegetable Labeling". Write to CONSUMER TIME Washington 25, D. C....and be sure to include your name, address, and the name of the station to which you are listening.

152. FREYMAN: Next week we'll hear how Government owned foods and supplies...are being released to civilians! Be with us then to hear...

153. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...MONEY IN TILL.

154. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!

155. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.

156. JOHN: How your money buys a living in wartime!

157. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.

158. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Christine Kempton, is presented by the War Food Administration through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. This broadcast period for CONSUMER TIME had been made available as a public service.

This is the National Broadcasting Company.